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Red Hill update: 'coupon' plate testing starts

PHOTO (public domain): 180625-N-EV910-019 PEARL HARBOR (June 25, 2018) Ten steel plates from a Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility tank are viewed by members of the Environmental Protection Agency, Hawaii Department of Health, Board of Water Supply and U.S. Navy. (U.S. Navy photo by Shannon R. Haney/RELEASED)

By Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

(JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM) As part of the continuing Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) process, the Navy and Defense Logistics Agency invited regulators from the Environmental Protection Agency, Hawaii Department of Health, and other stakeholders to an initial viewing today of steel plates called "coupons" removed from a Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility tank.

Ten separate coupons – each about 12-inches square – were cut from a tank to be assessed and tested, including for corrosion. Each selected plate had a single hole drilled through it and was inspected to ensure it was safe for removal.

This removal was among the first steps to validate that non-destructive scanning during the current tank Clean, Inspect, & Repair Process is as accurate as possible. The coupons were selected as part of collaborative AOC-driven discussion between the Navy and the regulators.

“All of the pieces were chosen based irregularities we noted in the scanning process,” said Lt. Cmdr. Blake Whittle, Fuels Director at Fleet Logistics Command Pearl Harbor. “We look forward to an in-depth study of the samples in coming weeks as part of a final report.”

An independent third-party lab will compare the physical specifications of the removed coupons against measurements provided by several different scanning

mechanisms, and a final report will be provided to the Navy and regulators.